

Suggestions for Long-Term Breast Health

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When treating women with breast conditions and/or those who have concern for their long-term breast health (what woman doesn't?), possibly the most important thing you can do as their practitioner is teach them to take care of themselves. Below are the suggestions I make to my female patients. I have even typed up this list to use as a patient "handout." Please feel free to copy it for use in your clinic.

Suggestions

- Eat as many fresh, lightly cooked vegetables as you wish. Go easy on spicy, sweet or greasy foods.
- Avoid overeating. This stagnates the stomach *qi* -- the stomach channel irrigates the breast tissue. Stagnant *qi* in any form is bad for the breasts.
- Try to avoid becoming overweight. There is a known relationship between body fat, fat consumption and breast cancer.
- Stay relaxed. Remember the "serenity prayer," or simply learn to know the difference between what you can and cannot change and control in your life and in the lives of those around you. Try to let go of what you cannot change and work at changing what you can.
- If you cannot relax, use relaxation tapes or meditation techniques to help you learn to do so. Stress, when not released or diffused by some method, is an enemy of breast health.
- Avoid caffeine in as many forms as you can. Stop eating chocolate except as a rare treat. Switch from coffee to black tea (or better yet, green tea).
- If you can, get some form of exercise every day, or at least every other day. It burns fat cells, reduces stress, increases energy, and improves self-image.
- Eat meat sparingly. Use it in broths, soups and stews, and not necessarily every day. Don't just eat chicken and fish; a variety of meats is better over the long term.
- Grains (well cooked and/or in the form of noodles) should be the foundation of any diet. Try eating something else instead of bread. Try cutting back to bread products only once per day.
- When you use oil, use olive oil. Studies show it to be a better option for breast health than other oils or fats.
- Do something for someone. Volunteer; participate in a community activity; grocery shop for a sick friend; invite a neighbor for a walk. Whatever your interests and skills, they are probably of use to someone else in your community. Putting meaning into your life in these ways is one of the best things you can do for yourself to maintain overall health.
- Learn a new vegetable recipe once every week or two. Try them on friends and family.
- Sugar is a no-no most of the time for optimal health. On the other hand, moderation in all things is important for health. Never eating a dessert probably reflects a very rigid personality.
- Breast massage and any form of self-massage is helpful in keeping *qi* and blood circulating. Learn a simple self-massage regime from a book or make one up for yourself.
- Don't beat yourself up if and when you do get an illness or disease. Everyone's body will develop disease at some point in life. Focus on the positive. Do as much as you can on your own to stay healthy for as long as you can in life. Remember: in the end, no one gets out of here alive. Be grateful for the blessings that you have.

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